

Tennessee Higher Education Commission

**Statewide P-16 Initiative**

October 24, 2005, 2:00-4:00 pm  
THEC 18<sup>th</sup> Floor Conference Room  
Parkway Towers, Nashville, Tennessee

The purpose of the meeting convened by Commission staff was to call together leadership across P-16, from public and private institutions, with representation from the Governor's Office to consider the best approach for a statewide, unified, and collaborative P-16 initiative designed to improve student readiness for college. Agency and system heads attending, accompanied by members of their staffs, were:

Dr. Lana Seivers, Commissioner of Education  
Dr. Claude O. Pressnell, Jr., President, Tennessee Independent College and Universities Association  
Dr. John D. Petersen, President, University of Tennessee  
Dr. Gary L. Nixon, Executive Director, State Board of Education  
Dr. Charles W. Manning, Chancellor, Tennessee Board of Regents  
Mr. Drew Kim, Governor's Office  
Dr. Richard G. Rhoda, Executive Director, Tennessee Higher Education Commission

The meeting followed an agenda which included summaries of the P-16 focus of the 2005-2010 State Master Plan for Higher Education and a GEAR UP grant update. The state has received \$20 million in federal funds over six years for a GEAR UP initiative aimed at expanded access to low income students in selected counties and a statewide effort for P-16 curriculum alignment.

As further context for a discussion on how to frame a statewide P-16 Initiative, the group identified major "pipeline" concerns as they have surfaced at the state as well as from the local P-16 councils. It was agreed that the fifteen local P-16 councils, established through TBR leadership, can provide a base for a statewide framework for improving student readiness for college.

The discussion moved to defining specific actions to shape the initiative. The group considered the following possible components:

- Curriculum alignment
- Early assessment
- Dual enrollment
- Increased rigor of the high school senior year
- College preparatory as the default high school curriculum
- Higher standards for math and science

- Requiring a 4<sup>th</sup> unit of mathematics for high school graduation
- XAP as a counseling and access tool
- Enhanced student success in the college Freshman year
- Increased rate of graduation
- Increased rate of retention from the first to second college year
- Professional development for math instructors
- Changes in teacher preparation by universities
- Use of GEAR UP objectives and funds to support the initiative
- Building on the existing local P-16 council network

The following decisions were the outcome of the discussion:

- (1) The statewide collaborative P-16 initiative should first focus on improving student proficiency in mathematics, through an alignment of learning outcomes to ensure that a student leaves high school ready for college mathematics. This alignment will require attention to K-12 mathematics requirements as well as college-level mathematics expectations. The math focus will encompass professional development for teachers/faculty, changes in teacher preparation curricula, support for school counselors, building a statewide data warehouse on student performance, and assessment activities to measure the effectiveness of the reform.
- (2) The State P-16 Council will be reconstituted to include the leadership of the agencies represented at the meeting along with added representatives from business/industry and the community. The reconstituted P-16 Council, with THEC leadership, will serve as the oversight body for statewide P-16 initiatives. The primary messages the Initiative should send are that students must be prepared for changing employment demands, and Tennessee must have a prepared workforce to be competitive in tomorrow's economy.
- (3) The State P-16 Council will oversee work of three key committees with broad membership representation from K-12, higher education, and economic development:
  - a. A committee on curriculum alignment, focusing first on mathematics standards and then other disciplinary areas, faculty professional development, and teacher preparation curricula revision. The committee will be staffed by Dr. Linda Doran, Senior Policy Officer, THEC.
  - b. The GEAR UP Advisory Board, directing grant activities toward statewide interventions for grades 11 and 12 (particularly in mathematics) and selected-site 7<sup>th</sup> grade cohort interventions. The Board will be staffed by Dr. Brian Noland, Associate Executive Director of Policy, Planning, and Research, THEC.
  - c. A committee on data and assessment, building a statewide data warehouse for tracking student performance across P-16. Dr. Noland will staff the committee.

- (4) The discussion group agreed that the January 2006 joint meeting of the State Board of Education and the Tennessee Higher Education Commission will be dedicated to a unified and focused P-16 movement as it will be directed by the newly reconstituted State P-16 Council.
- (5) The discussion group agreed to meet annually, at a minimum, and that the THEC staff would ensure regular communication to the Council and others on the progress of the three work committees.

The discussion group adjourned at 4:00 pm.